

Position Paper
2009 California Tribal Water Summit
Hopland Band Of Pomo Indians

The Hopland Band Of Pomo Indians reservation is located on the headwaters of two small watersheds that are tributary to the Russian River. The Tribe is fortunate in that a small amount of steelhead make it back from the ocean to spawn in the reservation streams. Thus the tribe contributes to the health of the large Russian River watershed and its fishery. Ironically the reservation has not enough potable drinking water for its residents and must truck water in from the town of Hopland. The tribe has worked hard and spent a lot of money to build a pipeline to Hopland, five miles away. Yet the Hopland Public Utility District, which is drawing water from the Russian River, is refusing to hook up the pipeline. This needs to be remediated.

The Hopland Rancheria was established in 1907 in Southern Mendocino County. The Hopland Band of Pomo Indian Tribe is located in Southern Mendocino County 3 miles east of the town of Hopland. Our land base is roughly 2,000 acres and we currently have 750 tribal members. It is estimated that 300 residents currently reside on the Hopland Reservation. Our Tribe gained federal trust status in early 1900's only to have that status terminated by a law passed in the 1950's. We regained federal trust status in 1979 and still enjoy trust status. The water resources on the Hopland Rancheria have always been limited. Shallow wells, water infiltration gallery and one natural spring historically were the sources of water on the Hopland Rancheria.

Today only a single well exist on the Hopland Rancheria. The water infiltration gallery was assisted by Indian Health Service (IHS), US EPA and determined to be a surface water resource. The natural spring was also assist by IHS, US EPA and determined to a surface water resource. Surface water used for the purpose of drinking water must be disinfected by a certain process. This process has 4 methods. At the time of these assessments to our infiltration gallery and natural spring the Hopland Tribe was in no shape to meet the cost for these 4 treatment methods so the tribe deemed these sources non-feasible and both sources were abandoned.

Currently we rely on water from the city of Hopland. This water is hauled by a trucking company which is at an extreme cost to the Hopland Tribe. The drinking water well we operate is non-operational and has been so since late summer 2009. The Hopland Tribe survives solely on the water purchased from the city of Hopland. A pipe line was constructed in 2008 and 2009 from the city of Hopland to supply the Tribe. Legal troubles have arisen between the Hopland Public Utilities Department and the Hopland Tribe so the pipe line project had been halted and there seems to be no resolving this matter in the near future.

This is the position of the Hopland Tribe in January 2010.